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ABSTRACT

In order to examine changes in: (1) occupational aspirations, (2) perceptions of goal blockages to occupational aspirations, and (3) values associated with occupational choice, a sample of South Carolina young adults were surveyed. Useable data were obtained from 75 white and 75 black males and 50 white and 50 black females who had been contacted as 10th and 12th graders and again as young adults in 1972. Responses relative to occupational aspirations indicated no marked changes, though: (1) white male managerial and white female technical/professional aspirations had increased; (2) black male glamour aspirations had decreased and their service worker aspirations had increased; (3) black female service worker aspirations had decreased while their sales/Clerical aspirations had increased. Responses relative to value changes and occupational choice indicated: (1) the chance to make money had decreased in importance while a somewhat more altruistic attitude had increased among all groups; (2) the chance to become an important person had decreased in importance for all groups except white females; (3) steady employment had increased in importance for all except white males. Responses relative to goal blockage indicated: (1) an increase in black male and female perceptions of race as a job deterrent, (2) a decrease among all group perceptions of lack of technical schools as a deterrent, (3) a decrease among all groups in geographic immobility perceptions. (JC)

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PERCEPTIONS OF GOAL BLOCKAGES ASSOCIATED WITH OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE OF A PANEL OF SOUTH CAROLINA YOUTH, 1967-1972 1/

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1/ Paper presented as part of a Panel on Mobility Attitudes and Attainment of Social Status. Research on a Panel of Southern Youth at the Annual Meetings of the Rural Sociological Society San Francisco, California, August 21-24, 1975.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to examine changes in (a) occupational aspirations, (b) perceptions of goal blockages to attainment of occupational aspirations, and (c) values associated with occupational choice of a panel of youth in South Carolina as they enter young adulthood.

SOURCE OF PANEL

The panel of respondents from whom data were gathered was selected from high school students who had been interviewed twice previously as part of a regional research project involving researchers in several southern states . 3/ The first contact was made in 1966-67 when the students were tenth-graders in high school. They were part of a sample of 5,400 high school students chosen to be representative of all tenth-grade high school students in South Carolina.

The second contact was made in 1968-69 when the students were high school seniors. At this time, all seniors in the high schools included in the 1966-67 study were interviewed. In the few instances where sample high schools had been closed by consolidation, the tenth-graders were followed into their new high school. A more complete description of sampling and interviewing procedures is included in a previous report. 4/

3/ Southern Regional Research Project S-81, "Development of Human Resource Potentials of Rural Youth in the South and Their Patterns of Mobility" and its predecessor project, S-61, "Human Resource Development and Mobility in the Rural South."

4/ Boyd, Virlyn A., "Aspirations, Expectations and Attitudes of South Carolina High School Students," AE 355, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson, S. C., September 1970.

For the third contact, a subsample or panel was drawn from the 3,497 students who had been contacted both as tenth graders and as twelfth graders. The panel was selected to include 75 whites males, 75 black males, 50 white females, and 50 black females. The sampling procedure used insured that the panel members were randomly selected from their respective color-sex group. The panel of respondents on whom this report is based includes the 221 young people of the 250 chosen for the panel on whom records could be secured for the third contact. The last contact was made in 1972 when the students were three years out of high school. Attrition was due to inability to locate some of the respondents and to refusals.

CHANGES IN OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

The question used to ascertain occupational aspirations of the respondents was: "If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you desire most as a lifetime job?" Respondents were requested to give an exact job. Occupational aspirations indicated at each of the three contacts are shown in Table 1-A and 1-B.5/ Although no marked changes were reported, there were some interesting shifts. For the white males, there was a 9.0 percentage point increase in the proportion who aspired to jobs classified as managerial. Among the white females, the percent aspiring to professional and technical occupations increased from 49.8 percent to 69.4 percent. The greatest decrease for white females (from 13.0 percent to 2.0 percent) occurred in the jobs classified as service workers. A part of this decrease

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5/ Because of the coding procedures used for the regional panel, it was not possible to use the regional data for occupational choice. Sophomore and senior data are for the total South Carolina sample. The third contact is for the South Carolina portion of the panel with occupational choice coded by the same system used for sophomores and seniors in South Carolina.

Table 1-A. Changes in Occupational Aspirations of White Youth in South Carolina by Sex, 1967-1972

Occupational Aspiration	Males Percentage Distribution 1967 N=2,619	1969 N=1,510	1972 N=69	Change 1967-1972	Females Percentage Distribution 1967 N=2,781	1969 N=1,464	1972 N=49	Change 1967-1972
Professional, technical	46.7	46.0	43.5	-3.2	49.8	43.9	69.4	+19.6
Managerial	8.4	11.8	17.4	+9.0	1.0	1.1	-	- 1.0
Clerical, sales	3.2	4.6	2.9	-0.3	23.9	23.0	22.5	- 1.4
Craftsmen	15.5	10.8	17.4	+1.9	0.3	0.2	-	- 0.3
Operatives	4.2	1.7	4.3	+0.1	1.2	0.3	-	- 1.2
Service workers	1.6	1.9	4.3	+2.7	13.0	9.9	2.0	-11.0
Laborers	0.5	-	-	-0.5	0.1	-	-	- 0.1
Glamour	9.1	16.8	8.8	-0.3	8.5	20.0	4.1	- 4.4
Military	5.3	2.8	1.4	-3.9	1.2	0.2	-	- 1.2
No answer	5.5	3.6	-	-5.5	1.0	1.4	2.0	+ 1.0

Table 1-B. Changes in Occupational Aspirations of Black youth in South Carolina by Race and Sex, 1967-1972

Occupational Aspirations	Males Percentage Distribution 1967 N=820	1969 N=640	1972 N=57	Change 1967-1972	Females Percentage Distribution 1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
Professional, technical	39.6	33.9	42.1	+2.5	48.5	36.5	50.0	+1.5
Managerial	6.1	7.0	10.5	+4.4	0.8	0.8	-	-0.8
Clerical, sales	3.9	7.5	5.3	+1.4	23.9	33.3	36.4	+12.5
Craftsmen	19.0	22.2	15.8	-3.2	0.7	0.5	-	-0.7
Operatives	5.6	6.1	8.8	+3.2	2.3	3.4	2.3	-
Service workers	2.2	2.5	10.5	+8.3	13.9	12.1	6.8	-7.1
Laborers	1.3	0.3	-	-1.3	0.3	0.1	-	-0.3
Glamour	8.1	10.8	1.7	-6.4	6.2	10.8	4.5	-1.7
Military	6.1	2.8	5.3	-0.8	1.9	0.7	-	-1.9
No answer	8.1	6.9	-	-8.1	1.5	1.8	-	-1.5

could be due to the fact that aspiring to be a housewife was classified as service worker occupation and that being a housewife was less popular in 1973 than in 1967.

For the black males, glamour occupations decreased while the service worker classification increased. There was a decrease of 7.1 percentage points in black females aspiring to be service workers. The proportion of black females aspiring to be clerical and sales workers increased from 23.9 percent to 36.4 percent. Again, some of this decline may have been due to the loss in popularity of being a housewife.

CHANGES IN VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

At each of the three contacts with the panel members, an attempt was made to assess the importance the respondents attached to selected values that are sometimes associated with the choice of an occupation. The question used was "in picking the job you would most like to have, how important are the following things about the job?" The respondents were asked to rate as very important, important, not very important, or not at all important the following items:

(a) Offers you the chance to make a lot of money.

(b) Gives you a chance to help other people

(c) Gives you a chance to become an important person.

(d) Gives you steady employment.

(e) Gives you a chance to be your own boss.

(f) Offers a chance for excitement.

Answers given for the first four items are analyzed on this paper. The percentage distribution of the rankings given to the importance of "a chance to make money" are given in Table 2. Overall, "the chance to make money" declined in importance with all race and sex groups having a decrease in the percentage who ranked "the chance to make money" as very important. Conversely, except for white males, all groups showed an increase in the proportion who ranked "the chance to make money" either as not at all important or as not very important.

The second value associated with choice of job had to do with "giving one a chance to help other people." The percentage distribution of answers to this part of the question are shown in Table 3. Although the results are inconsistent, there is some indication that the members of the panel became somewhat more altruistic in this regard with a higher proportion of each color and sex group indicating that this feature of their job choice was very important at the time of the last contact as compared with when they were sophomores in high school.

The importance to the panel members of "a chance to become an important person" as a job feature is shown in Table 4. The proportion indicating that this was a very important aspect of their job decreased for black and white males and black females but increased slightly for white females. Overall, however, changes in the relative ranking of this value were not consistent.

Except for white males, a higher proportion of each color-sex group indicated that steady employment was a very important feature

Table 2. Changes in Perceived Importance of "A Chance to Make Money" as an Occupational Value of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972.

Perceived Importance	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all important	1.4	1.4	2.8	+ 1.4	6.1	4.1	8.2	+ 2.1
Not very important	20.8	20.8	15.3	- 5.5	24.5	28.6	32.7	+ 8.2
Important	43.1	43.1	56.9	+13.8	51.0	44.9	46.9	- 4.1
Very Important	34.7	34.7	23.6	-11.1	18.4	22.4	12.2	- 6.2
No answer	-	-	1.4	+ 1.4	-	-	-	-
			(N=56)				(N=44)	
Black Youth								
Not at all important	1.8	1.8	-	- 1.8	-	4.6	2.3	+ 2.3
Not very important	5.4	1.8	12.5	+ 7.1	13.6	6.8	20.5	+ 6.9
Important	32.1	35.7	32.1	-	25.0	38.6	38.6	+13.6
Very Important	60.7	60.7	55.4	- 5.3	61.4	50.0	38.6	-22.8
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3. Changes in the Perceived Importance of "A Chance to Help Other People" as an Occupational Value of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Perceived Importance	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all important	1.4	2.8	-	- 1.4	-	-	-	-
Not very important	16.7	13.9	12.5	- 4.2	12.2	4.1	4.1	- 8.1
Important	61.1	61.1	58.3	- 2.8	34.7	44.9	34.7	-
Very important	20.8	22.2	27.8	+ 7.0	53.1	51.0	61.2	+ 8.1
No answer	-	-	1.4	+ 1.4	-	-	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all important	-	1.8	-	-	2.3	2.3	-	- 2.3
Not very important	5.4	5.4	12.5	+ 7.1	6.8	6.8	2.3	- 4.5
Important	51.8	44.6	39.3	-12.5	15.9	34.1	18.2	+ 2.3
Very important	42.8	46.4	48.2	+ 5.4	72.7	56.8	79.5	+ 6.8
No answer	-	1.8	-	-	2.3	-	-	- 2.3

Table 4. Changes in the perceived Importance of "A Chance to Become an Important Person" as an Occupational Value of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Perceived Importance	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all important	4.2	4.2	8.3	+ 4.1	24.5	10.2	14.3	-10.2
Not very important	44.4	36.1	45.8	+ 1.4	38.8	42.9	61.2	+22.4
Important	30.6	45.8	37.5	+ 6.9	26.5	28.6	12.2	-14.3
Very Important	20.8	13.9	7.0	-13.8	10.2	18.3	12.3	+ 2.1
No answer	-	-	1.4	+ 1.4	-	-	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all important	7.1	12.5	7.1	-	4.5	9.1	4.6	+ 0.1
Not very important	26.8	19.6	21.4	- 5.4	22.7	22.7	38.6	+15.9
Important	21.4	28.6	41.1	+19.7	36.4	29.6	25.0	-11.4
Very Important	44.7	39.3	30.4	-14.3	34.1	36.4	31.8	- 2.3
No answer	-	-	-	-	2.3	2.3	-	+ 2.3

of the job they had aspired to as their life work when they were three years out of high school as compared to the answers they had given at the first contact, Table 5.

CHANGE IN PERCEPTIONS OF GOAL BLOCKAGES ASSOCIATED WITH OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

The question used to measure the respondents' perception of goal blockages associated with their occupational choice was "How much effect do you think each of the following things will have in keeping you from getting the job of your choice?" The respondents were asked to rate each of the thirteen items listed as having very much, much, some, or no effect at all. Answers given for four of the thirteen items are presented below.

One of the items included in the list of possible goal blocks was "my race." As would be expected, this was not viewed as an important goal block by the white respondents and the results from the white students are not included. The changes in the perception of race as an occupational goal block by the black are presented in Table 6. The proportion of both black males and black females viewing race as having no effect at all in their getting the job of their choice increased from 1967 to 1972. On the other hand, the proportion indicating race as having very much of an effect in keeping them from getting the job of their choice decreased for both sexes.

Two items were used to measure the perception of the extent of lack of job opportunities as a goal block in getting the job of one's choice. The first of these had to do with the national scene and was phrased "Good jobs are getting too scarce in the U. S."

Table 5. Changes in the Perceived Importance of "Steady Employment" as an Occupational Value of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972.

Perceived Importance	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all important	1.4	2.8	1.4	-	8.2	2.0	2.0	- 6.2
Not very important	1.4	7.0	7.0	+ 5.6	6.1	6.1	4.2	- 1.9
Important	26.4	19.4	27.7	+ 1.3	30.6	34.7	36.7	+ 6.1
Very important	70.8	70.8	62.5	- 8.3	55.1	57.2	57.1	+ 2.0
No answer	-	-	1.4	+ 1.4	-		-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all important	3.6	3.6	-	- 3.6	4.5	2.3	-	- 4.5
Not very important	7.1	5.4	5.4	- 1.7	13.6	6.8	9.1	- 4.5
Important	35.7	33.8	32.1	- 3.6	34.1	31.8	29.5	- 4.6
Very important	53.6	55.4	62.5	+ 8.9	45.5	56.8	61.4	+15.9
No answer	-	1.8	-	-	2.3	2.3	-	- 2.3

Table 6. Changes in Perceptions of Race as a Block to Occupational Attainment of a Panel of 100 Black Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972.

Extent view race as to block to occupational attainment	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage distribution (N=56)				Percentage distribution (N=44)			
Not at all	50.0	44.6	53.6	+ 3.6	50.0	36.4	54.6	+ 4.6
Some	28.6	28.6	26.8	- 1.8	27.3	40.9	31.8	+ 4.5
Much	5.4	5.3	17.8	+12.4	4.5	9.1	9.1	+ 4.6
Very much	8.9	17.9	1.8	- 7.1	18.2	9.1	4.5	-13.7
No answer	7.1	3.6	-	- 7.1	-	4.5	-	-

Answers to this question are summarized in Table 7. The proportion of black males and black females indicating that scarcity of jobs in the United States would have "much" and "very much" effect on their getting the job of their choice increased.

The other item pertaining to perception of the labor market was "Lack of good job opportunities in or near my community," see Table 8. Black males took a more pessimistic view of the local labor market in 1972 than they did as high school sophomores in 1967 with 10.7 percentage point decrease in those who indicated the local labor market situation would have no effect at all on their getting the job of their choice. There was a corresponding 10.7 percentage point increase in the black males who viewed the local labor situation as having "very much" effect on their getting the job of their choice. White males were more optimistic in 1972.

At the time of the first contact, very few of the then tenth-graders perceived the lack of technical schools or colleges as a deterrent to their getting the job of their choice, Table 9. By 1972, only a very small percentage of the white panel members indicated that lack of technical schools would have any effect at all on their getting the job of their choice. Even though there was a somewhat larger proportion of the black panel members who attached importance to the lack of technical schools, this proportion had decreased markedly from 1967 to 1972. These changes could have been caused by the maturation of the respondents or by their increased awareness of the opportunities available in the chain of regional technical education centers operated by the State of South Carolina.

Table 7. Changes in Perceptions of Lack of Jobs in the United States as a Block to Occupational Attainment of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Extent lack of jobs in the U. S. viewed as a block to occupational attainment	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all	45.9	63.9	45.8	- 0.1	38.8	69.4	40.8	+ 2.0
Some	36.1	31.9	47.2	+11.1	40.8	24.5	34.7	- 6.1
Much	8.3	2.8	1.4	- 6.9	12.2	2.0	16.3	+ 4.1
Very much	9.7	1.4	5.6	- 4.1	8.2	4.1	8.2	-
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all	41.1	46.4	21.4	-19.7	38.6	47.7	20.4	-18.2
Some	37.5	32.1	44.7	+ 7.2	36.4	29.5	40.9	+ 4.5
Much	5.3	10.7	23.2	+17.9	6.8	2.3	11.4	+ 4.6
Very much	12.5	7.2	8.9	- 3.6	13.6	11.4	25.0	+11.4
No answer	3.6	3.6	1.8	- 1.8	4.6	9.1	2.3	- 2.3

Table 8. Changes in Perceptions of Lack of Good Job Opportunities Near Community as a Block to Occupational Attainment of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Extent lack of good job opportunities viewed as a block to occupational attainment	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all	38.9	43.0	43.0	+ 4.1	34.7	36.7	38.8	+ 4.1
Some	43.1	34.7	34.7	- 8.4	46.9	44.9	30.6	-16.3
Much	8.3	16.7	16.7	+ 8.4	8.2	6.3	8.2	-
Very much	9.7	5.6	5.6	- 4.1	10.2	12.1	22.4	+12.2
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all	37.5	28.6	26.8	-10.7	29.5	29.5	29.6	+ 0.1
Some	28.6	30.4	25.0	- 3.6	29.6	25.0	29.5	- 0.1
Much	7.1	21.4	14.3	+ 7.2	13.6	11.4	9.1	- 4.5
Very much	23.2	14.3	33.9	+10.7	25.0	27.3	31.8	+ 6.8
No answer	3.6	5.3	-	- 3.6	2.3	6.8	-	- 2.3

Table 9. Changes in Perceptions of Lack of Technical Schools or Colleges Near Community as a Block to Occupational Attainment of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Extent lack of technical schools or colleges near community viewed as a block to occupational attainment	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all	79.2	93.1	95.8	+16.6	77.6	89.8	91.8	+14.2
Some	12.4	6.9	4.2	- 8.2	18.4	8.2	8.2	-10.2
Much	4.2	-	-	- 4.2	4.0	2.0	-	- 4.0
Very much	4.2	-	-	- 4.2	-	-	-	-
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all	51.8	69.6	66.1	+14.3	47.7	63.7	72.7	+25.0
Some	30.3	19.6	23.1	- 7.2	43.2	22.7	22.8	-20.4
Much	8.9	5.4	5.4	- 3.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	-
Very much	3.6	3.6	5.4	+ 1.8	2.3	-	-	- 2.3
No answer	5.4	1.8	-	- 5.4	2.3	9.1	-	- 2.3

The last goal blockage item reported in this paper is the extent to which unwillingness of the respondent to change geographic locations is viewed as a hindrance in getting the job of his/her choice. For all color and sex groups in 1972, two-thirds to three-fourths indicated that their not wanting to move would have no effect at all, Table 10. The changes from 1967 to 1972 indicate that for all four race and sex groups, geographic immobility is viewed as having a decreasing effect. This could be caused by a greater willingness to migrate on the part of the respondents or to their perceptions of greater job opportunities in their own localities.

SUMMARY

The changes in occupational aspirations, values associated with occupational choice, and in perceptions of goal blockage associated with occupational choice reflect, in general, changes occuring in the larger society during the period under study.

Employment opportunities decreased toward the end of the period with the beginning of the recession of the early seventies. Women had greater freedom in the choice of occupations. Federal laws and regulation had increased the participation of blacks in occupations that had been closed to them in the past. These and other changes in the larger society are mirrored in the changes observed between the tenth graders in 1967 and in 1972.

Table 10. Changes in Perception of "Not Wanting to Move" as a Block to Occupational Attainment of a Panel of 221 Youth in South Carolina, 1967-1972

Extent not wanting to move viewed as a block to occupational attainment	Males				Females			
	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972	1967	1969	1972	Change 1967-1972
	Percentage Distribution (N=72)				Percentage Distribution (N=49)			
White Youth								
Not at all	69.5	70.8	69.4	- 0.1	77.6	79.6	73.5	- 4.1
Some	19.4	20.8	23.6	+ 4.2	16.3	16.4	20.4	+ 4.1
Much	1.4	7.0	5.6	+ 4.2	2.0	2.0	6.1	+ 4.1
Very much	9.7	1.4	1.4	- 8.3	4.1	-	-	- 4.1
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	-
	(N=56)				(N=44)			
Black Youth								
Not at all	66.1	67.9	73.2	+ 7.1	38.6	63.6	63.6	+25.0
Some	17.9	17.9	19.6	+ 1.7	36.4	20.5	20.4	-16.0
Much	1.8	1.8	5.4	+ 3.6	6.8	2.3	2.3	- 4.5
Very much	7.1	7.1	1.8	- 5.3	13.6	6.8	11.4	- 2.2
No answer	7.1	5.3	-	- 7.1	4.6	6.8	2.3	- 2.3